National Agriculture Policy for drought/flood affected farmers

545. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any National Agriculture Policy for farmers to save them from drought/floods, etc., in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) In the event of natural calamities, such as, drought/flood, relief is provided under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and the National Calamity Contingency Fund. Calamity Relief Fund is a fund available with the State Government to provide immediate relief. For the year 2007-08, allocation of Rs. 4258.85 crore is available out of which the share of Central Government is Rs. 3194.14 crore. For severe natural calamities where the relief expenditure cannot be accommodated within the CRF, additional funding from the Central Government is provided under the National Calamity Contingency Fund. Under the existing norms, assistance towards agricultural inputs subsidy is admissible to small and marginal farmers where crop loss on account of natural calamities is 50% and above. Input subsidy is also admissible to farmers other than small and marginal farmers, in case of severe calamity occurring for a second consecutive year or subsequent year. Besides, Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines to Banks for conversion/rescheduling of loans of farmers in the event of natural calamity. The national Agriculture Insurance Scheme is also under implementation with the objective to protect the farmers against crop losses suffered on account of natural calamities, such as drought, flood, hailstorm, cyclone, pests and diseases.

National Horticulture Mission

546. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Orissa Government has requested for coverage of all districts in the State under the National Horticulture Mission;

(b) whether Central Government has covered only 19 districts and there remaining 11 are yet to be covered under the above mission; and

(c) if so, what is the action plan of Central Government to cover the remaining 11 districts under the above mission, as these districts are suffering in horticulture sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Till 2006-07, 19 districts of Orissa were included under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM). Since the NHM adopts an area based regionally differentiated cluster approach for developing potential horticulture crops duly ensuring backward and forward linkages, crops are taken up for development in the districts based on the comparative advantage of crops depending on agro-climatic conditions, potential for development and marketing opportunities. The Government of Orissa has requested for inclusion of 5 new districts under NHM during 2007-08. Accordingly, another five districts have been included during 2007-08.